CHAPTER II.

MANAGEMENT OF STATE FORESTS.

I.—REGULATION OF MANAGEMENT.

(*a*).—Working Plans and their Control.

32. Mr. T. B. Fry, Deputy Conservator of Forests, 1st Grade, was in charge of the Working Plans Division from the commencement of the year till the 29th November 1896, when Mr. R. S. Fagan, Deputy Conservator of Forests, 2nd Grade, succeeded him and held it until the end of the year.

33. The operations of this officer were confined to the Divisions of East Khándesh, Násik, Ahmednagar, Poona and Sátára.

34. During the fair season 134 compartments were demarcated upon the ground, at a total cost of Rs. 1,001; of these compartments aggregating 704·025 acres are located in the bábul forests of the Poona Division, and 91 compartments with an area of 13,835·225 acres in the teak forests of the East Khándesh, Násik, Ahmednagar, Poona and Sátára Divisions. Six of the compartments were for exploitation during 1896-97, and 128 for exploitation in the ensuing year. 693 cairns and 806 mounds were erected, 14,052 intermediate stones were imbedded, and 483 ditches were dug to define the limits of these compartments: and 667 old cairns were also repaired. In addition to this the surveyors employed under the several Divisional Forest Officers demarcated on the ground 82 compartments with an area of 4,634 acres, at a total cost Rs. 299-7-7. The whole work of the year can be tabulated thus:—

No.	Divisions.	I.—By the Working Plans Division.						II.—By District Divisional Officers.					
		Number of Compartments.	Area of Compartment.		Cost of Demarcation.		Number of Cairns erected.	Number of Compartments.	Area of Compartment.		Cost of Demarcation.		Number of Cairns erected.
			Total.	Average.	Total.	Average.			Total.	Average	Total.	Average.	
			Acres.	Acres.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.			Acres.	Acres.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	
1	East Khándesh.	24	7,981·7	332·571				5	123	24	3 0 0	0 9 7	Not known
2	West do. ...	...	.....	...				10	2,474	247	31 0 0	3 1 2	143
3	Násik	30	3,026·1	100·8			806 cairns. 667 uralis. 14,052 stones. 483 ditches.	2	293	146	44 0 0	22 0 9	120
4	Ahmednagar ...	16	1,543·7	96·6	1,000 9 5	10 2 6		28	213	8	1 0 0	0 0 7	64
5	Poona	51	1,118·725	21·985				19	743	39	134 0 0	7 1 4	348
6	Sátara	13	869·025	66·845				18	788	44	86 0 0	4 12 4	1,897
7	Sholápur ...	...	.....	...				...	...	...	...	...	...
	Total ...	134	14,539·25	108·5	1,000 9 5	10 2 6	...	82	4,634	57	299 0 0	3 10 5	2,572

34. Notwithstanding the fact that the number of compartments demarcated during the year by the staff of the Working Plans officer was less than that of the preceding year by 43, and the area by 248·46 acres, the cost of demarcation has been greater; the reasons for this excess, as explained by the Divisional Forest Officer, Working Plans, are—

(*a*). The compartments this year were more scattered than in the past year, especially in the case of the bábul forests.

(*b*). 1,022-16 acres in the Sátpuda forests of the Chopda Range of the East Khándesh Division were demarcated in a country more difficult to work over on account of the hilly broken ground and the dense jungle covering it, and on account of the absence of villages, and of labour not being obtainable on the spot, but having to be brought up from the plains.

(*c*). Labour has been very difficult to procure in remote forest areas owing to the famine, and to the disinclination of villagers to go long distances from their homes; in the Sátpudas at one time work was practically stopped for want of hands.

35. The Working Plan for the Purandhar Range in the Poona Division was made during the rains, and a scheme was drawn up for differentiating the blocks

of Kopergaon, Nevása and Shrigonda Ranges of the Ahmednagar Division, which had been submitted to the Conservator last year and was returned by him for revision. While during the working season Mr. Fagan visited forests in the Ahmednagar, Násik and East Khándesh Divisions, and discussed with the respective Divisional Forest Officers the schemes of Working Plans to be applied to the forests of those districts.

36. The proportion of forests in the several divisions which have been differentiated into "forest blocks" and are placed under systematic treatment, is exhibited in the following table:—

No.	Division.	Area of Forest.	Area differentiated up to the end of 1896-97.	Area still remaining.	Percentage of Forest under detailed treatment.
1	East Khándesh...	811	774	37	95·43
2	West do.	1,739	139	1,600	8·01
3	Násik	1,279	819	460	64·03
4	Ahmednagar	848	428	420	50·47
5	Poona	711	464	247	65·26
6	Sátára	698	85	613	12·35
7	Sholápur	278	8	270	2·87
	Total ...	6,364	2,717	3,647	42·68

37. From the above it will be seen that a total area 2,717 square miles has been brought provisionally under Working Plans arrangement up to the close of the year, but only a few of the 40 exploitable compartments, into which each forest block contained within this total area has been subdivided, have been laid out on the ground; and in so far as this state of incompletion affects the Working Plans, it may justly be said that these Working Plans exist as yet mainly on paper. But the Conservator would, for the reasons explained in paragraph 41 of the Administration Report of the Central Circle for 1895-96, respectfully submit that this is not a serious defect, for to lay out all the 40 compartments on the ground in every forest block in the seven divisions of the Central Circle means to clear vegetation from and erect boundary-marks upon many thousands of linear miles of country, on the flat, as well as up mountain sides, down and across ravines and dales; and it would require the employment of an enormously large establishment of surveyors and measurers to complete this work within the space of the working seasons contained within a decade of years. As far as means will permit the demarcation of compartments on the ground is being pushed, and so long as this demarcation keeps well ahead of the coming year, and discovers no important errors in the large scales forest maps of the Forest Survey in boundaries and areas, as much is being done as is immediately necessary and is possible with the means at command.

(*b*).—Annual Plans of Operations.

38. Each Divisional Forest Officer submitted as usual a general and detailed scheme of forest operations to be undertaken during the year regulated by the funds available for expenditure in the sanctioned Budget Estimates; and after approval by the Collector and the Conservator of Forests, the operations were started, and were carried out, with slight deviations.

II.—WORKING OF THE YEAR.

(*a*).—Communications and Buildings.

(*1*).—*Roads.*

39. The Public Works Department being fully occupied upon the extensive famine relief works which had perforce to be undertaken in every division of the Circle, was not able to do anything towards the construction of any new roads that could serve the exploitation of produce from the forests.